



THE

Shadow

DYNAMITE 23

THE Shadow

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SINCE ARRIVING IN THIS COUNTRY
I'VE HEARD A LOT OF TALK ABOUT
"HUMAN SUFFERING" AND "DESPAIR,"
OF PEOPLE DRIVEN TO "DESPERATE
ENDS" BY HARD TIMES.

I'VE HEARD SOME PEOPLE
RAILING AGAINST HOW BASE
AND VENAL AND EVIL HUMANITY
IS CAPABLE OF BEING IN THE
FACE OF ADVERSITY.

BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I'VE
ENCOUNTERED SOME THAT BELIEVE
THAT, EVEN WHEN MAN IS AT ITS
WORST, HE IS CAPABLE OF
DOING GOOD.

THAT IN THE DEPTHS OF MISFORTUNE,
SOME ESSENTIAL NOBILITY SHINES
THROUGH. SOME INNATE GOODNESS
IN HUMANITY'S COLLECTIVE SOUL.

NONE OF THESE PEOPLE
HAS ANY IDEA WHAT THEY'RE
TALKING ABOUT...



I STOPPED BELIEVING IN THE EXISTENCE OF
"GOOD" AND "EVIL" WHEN I WAS STILL A CHILD.

I FOUND THEM TO BE
QUAINT NOTIONS THAT
HUMANITY SHOULD HAVE
LONG SINCE OUTGROWN.


I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT A MAN NAMED
NIETZSCHE SAID MUCH THE SAME THING,
BEFORE I WAS BORN. BUT WITH A NAME LIKE
THAT, HE WAS DOUBTLESS A GERMAN.

AND WHAT KIND
OF RUSSIAN WOULD
I BE IF I LISTENED
TO ANYTHING
A GERMAN HAD
TO SAY?

NO, THERE ARE NO SUCH THINGS AS GOOD
AND EVIL. THERE ARE SIMPLY THE THINGS
THAT A MAN WILL DO TO SURVIVE. THE THINGS
HE DOES TO CHANGE HIS DESTINY.

AND IT NEED NOT BE
SOME GRAND VICTORY.
SIMPLY SURVIVING FROM
ONE MOMENT TO THE
NEXT IS A KIND OF VICTORY.
EVEN THE SLIGHTEST
CHANGE CAN HELP.

ONLY IN DEATH DO WE FAIL.



WHAT IS MORE, THESE
PEOPLE DO NOT KNOW
TRUE SUFFERING.

HOW MANY OF THEM COULD
SURVIVE EVEN A SINGLE
SIBERIAN WINTER? OR EVEN A
MONTH IN THE TRENCHES?

HOW MANY ARE
CAPABLE OF DOING
WHAT IS TRULY
REQUIRED TO
SURVIVE...?

...RUSSIAN
KIDNAPPING
RING?

LISTEN, MACK, THE NAME'S CLYDE
BURK, AND I'M A REPORTER WITH
THE NEW YORK CLASSIC.

I'M WORKING ON A STORY
ABOUT THAT RUSSIAN GANG THAT
WAS SNATCHING GIRLS THE OTHER
MONTH. IF YOU SHARE A JUICY TIP,
I MIGHT MAKE IT WORTH
YOUR WHILE...

I WAS CLOSE TO
DOING MUCH MORE
THAN MERELY SURVIVING.
I WAS CLOSE TO THE
GRANDEST OF
VICTORIES.

ONLY TO HAVE IT SNATCHED
FROM MY HAND.



I ARRIVED HERE WITH GRAND PLANS,
JUST A FEW SHORT MONTHS AGO.
I HAD WHAT I BELIEVED WAS THE KEY TO
THE LIFE I HAD SOUGHT FOR SO LONG.



THERE WERE MEN IN THIS CITY,
WHO WOULD RECOGNIZE THE
POWER AND AUTHORITY OF THE
THING THAT I POSSESSED.



I WAS CERTAIN THAT, ONCE
I PRESENTED MYSELF TO THEM
AND MADE THINGS PLAIN, THAT THEY
WOULD BE MINE TO COMMAND.



«THE
GIRASOL.»



IN THIS,
I WAS MISTAKEN.





THEY WERE LESS
THAN IMPRESSED WITH
MY CREDENTIALS.

KTHUD

BUT HAVING PRESENTED MYSELF
TO THEM AS A PERSON OF MEANS AND
AUTHORITY, THEY THOUGHT PERHAPS THERE
WAS SOME MONEY TO BE MADE.

(GIVE ME
HIS HAND.)

THEY REQUIRED PROOF THAT THEY HAD
ME IN THEIR POSSESSION, THOUGH.

AAAAARGH!

A TOKEN BY
WHICH I COULD
BE IDENTIFIED.

(SHOULD
DO.)

UNGHKKH...



BUT THEY SOON
DISCOVERED THAT
THERE WAS NO ONE
FROM WHOM TO
DEMAND A RANSOM.
NO ONE KNEW ME.
NO ONE CARED.

ALL I HAD IN THE WORLD
WERE MY OWN WITS AND
MY RESOURCEFULNESS.
I HAD FALLEN FAR, SINCE
THE GLORY DAYS.

THE TIME CAME WHEN THEY
DECIDED SIMPLY TO DISPOSE OF ME,
AND CUT THEIR LOSSES.



BUT I HAD NOT
FALLEN SO FAR IN
THE WORLD THAT I
HAD FORGOTTEN
EVERYTHING I
ONCE KNEW.

3GLURGE

MY WOULD-BE-EXECUTIONER
WAS KIND ENOUGH TO SUPPLY
THE BLADE WHICH TOOK HIS
OWN LIFE.

AND I REGAINED MY
FREEDOM BEFORE ANY
OF THE OTHERS KNEW
WHAT HAD HAPPENED.



MY FREEDOM,
SUCH AS IT WAS,
THAT IS.

I SHOULD HAVE WALKED
LIKE AN EMPEROR AMONG THESE
PEOPLE. LIKE A TEAR.

INSTEAD, I FIND MYSELF AT THE
BOTTOM RUNG OF THEIR LADDER,
LOOKED DOWN UPON BY ALL.

BUT I CAN SEE WHERE
I WANT TO BE. HOW HIGH
I NEED TO CLIMB.

I SIMPLY NEED TO
FIND MY FOOTING,
AND DO WHAT IS
REQUIRED.




*I WAS ONCE FAR MORE THAN I AM NOW.
I WAS MUCH CLOSER TO THE HEIGHTS I'VE
LONG WISHED TO ATTAIN.*



*SOME MIGHT COMPLAIN ABOUT ILL
FORTUNE, OR RAIL AGAINST INJUSTICE, BUT
THOSE ARE SIMPLY ILLUSIONS, AS WELL.*

*BETTER TO SAY THAT I HAVE NOT
YET FOUND THE COURSE OF ACTION
THAT LEADS ME TO VICTORY. BUT I
HAVE NOT STOPPED LOOKING.*




*DOWN HERE AT THE
BOTTOM, SLEEP IS NOT
ALWAYS EASY TO FIND.*

HELP,
PLEASE, SOMEBODY,
HELP ME!



FOR THE
LOVE OF GOD,
WON'T ANYONE
HELP...?

*THE MORE EASILY ONE CAN
SIMPLY IGNORE THE DREGS
ON ALL SIDES, THE MORE
SOUNDLY ONE RESTS.*




I FOUND MYSELF AT THE
BOTTOM ONCE BEFORE,
IN A PIT OF MEN AND IRON
AND BLOOD, FIGHTING FOR
...MOTHER RUSSIA...
AGAINST ALL ENEMIES.



I FOUND MY TALENT IN
THOSE YEARS, AND WAS
HANDSOMELY REWARDED
FOR MY EFFORTS. GRANTED
THE ORDER OF ST. GEORGE
BY THE TSAR HIMSELF,
I WAS ESTABLISHED.



I WAS GRANTED A PLACE
IN THE SEVENTH STAR, THE TSAR'S
OWN SECRET INTELLIGENCE BRANCH,
AND TOOK PRIDE IN MY WORK.



I FOUND A KIND OF FELLOWSHIP WITH
THE MEN OF THE SEVENTH STAR. NOT
FRIENDSHIP, WHICH I'VE NEVER KNOWN.
BUT A BOND, NONETHELESS.

BUT THE TSAR FELL, AND LIKE
SO MANY OTHERS IN THE IMPERIAL
BUREAUCRACY I FOUND MYSELF
TUMBLING BACK TO THE BOTTOM
ONCE MORE.

SPARE
CHANGES?
ANY SPARE
CHANGES?

GOOD
LORD, THAT'S
A VICIOUS
LOOKING INJURY,
FRIEND.

YOU MUST
LET ME TAKE
A LOOK.

NO,
THANKS YOU.
FINE.

PLEASE, I AM A
DOCTOR. AT LEAST
LET ME CHANGE YOUR
DRESSINGS, CHECK FOR
ANY INFECTION.

SAID NO.
FINE.

THE ONLY THING WORSE
THAN BEING AT THE BOTTOM
IS THOSE WHO LOOK DOWN
UPON YOU WITH PITY.

BUT AN ADVANTAGE OF BEING
BENEATH CONTEMPT IS THAT ONE
IS ALSO BENEATH NOTICE.

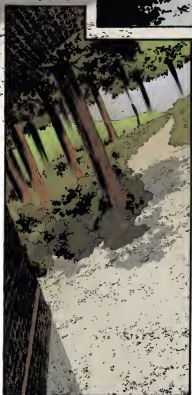
HUH, I COULD
HAVE SWORN THAT
THE HIPPOCROME WAS
THAT WAY.

OH, LOOK
DEAR, AT THAT
BUILDING!

EYES SLIDE
OVER YOU, SEE
THROUGH YOU.

UNTIL IT IS
TOO LATE.

IT LOOKS MUCH
BETTER ON ME,
ANYWAY.



THESE PEOPLE HERE AT THE BOTTOM RUNGS, THEY STILL CLING TO THIS FICTION OF "GOOD" AND "EVIL," EVEN IF IT PROFITS THEM NOTHING.

THAT IF THEY ARE GOOD, THEN SOMEHOW THINGS WILL BE BETTER FOR THEM, SOMEDAY.



THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT ONLY ONE FORCE HOLDS ANY SWAY OVER THEIR LIVES. AND THAT ONLY ONE CHOICE WOULD IMPROVE THEIR LOT IN LIFE.



...WOULD BE A SHAME IF ANYTHING WERE TO HAPPEN TO IT.

I'LL PAY, I SWEAR. I JUST DON'T HAVE THE MONEY WITH ME.



ALL THAT MATTERS IS POWER.





WHEN THE TSAR FELL, I HAD TO
CLIMB UPON ANOTHER LADDER, ELSEWHERE.
I FOUND MYSELF IN CHINA, IN THE EMPLOY
OF ONE OF THE FEUDING WARLORDS.

HERE AGAIN, MY TALENTS,
AND MY WILLINGNESS TO DO
WHATEVER WAS NECESSARY,
SERVED ME IN GOOD STEAD.

I WAS PAID HANDSOMELY FOR
MY SERVICES, AND WHILE MONEY
ISN'T POWER, AS SUCH...

...IT CAN BUY THE
NEXT BEST THING.

EVEN WITH THEIR FINANCIAL SYSTEM IN SHAMBLES, THERE IS MORE MONEY HERE THAN THESE FOOLS KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH.

FAT, LAZY, INDOLENT,
WITHOUT THE TEETH
TO DO WHAT NEEDS
TO BE DONE.



GOOD NIGHT,
CHARLIE.

'NIGHT,
MR. MANN.



THESE BANKERS AND INVESTORS
FLEECE THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS
FOR EVERY COIN, BUT CAN'T THINK OF
ANYTHING MORE THAN TO SAVE IT.

WEALTH IS WASTED
ON THOSE WHO REFUSE
TO USE IT.



WHATEVER HE CARRIES IN THAT CASE WOULD HELP ME CLIMB TO THE NEXT RUNG ON THE LADDER.

SO I DO WHAT IS REQUIRED.

GRAB THE CASE WITH ONE HAND, OPEN HIS BELLY WITH THE OTHER, AND I'LL BE AWAY BEFORE ANYONE CAN.

RUTLEDGE, YOU OLD SON OF A GUN!

HANK!



HOW YOU BEEN?

ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER DONUT.

NO ONE SAW ANYTHING.



THEY STILL GOT YOU WALKING THE BEAT? WOULD HAVE PEGGED YOU FOR A DESK JOB BY NOW.

AH, YOU KNOW ME, RUTLEDGE. I LIKE ALL THIS FRESH AIR. HA HA.



SO CLOSE TO CLIMBING UP FROM THE BOTTOM.

BUT PUSHED BACK DOWN AGAIN.



THE TIME OF THE
WARLORDS ENDED IN
CHINA, AND I RANGED
THE WORLD, LOOKING
FOR A PLACE FOR MY
TALENTS. A MERCENARY,
ASSASSIN, GUN AND
BLADE FOR HIRE.



AFRICA. SOUTH
AMERICA. CENTRAL
AMERICA. BUT IT
WAS DEEP WITHIN
THE JUNGLES OF
GUATEMALA THAT
I FINALLY FOUND
THE MISSING
PIECE.



I KNEW IT AT A GLANCE. IT WAS
IDENTICAL TO THE STONE THAT I'D
KNOWN, ALL THOSE YEAR AGO.

AND IT WOULD ONLY
TAKE A FRESH SETTING
AND EVERYTHING
WOULD BE MINE.

BUT IT WAS NOT TO BE
THE KEY THAT I HAD HOPED.
DID NOT UNLOCK THE DOORS
I NEEDED OPENED.

SO I MUST BEGIN MY
CLIMB AGAIN. WHAT OF IT?
I HAVE DONE IT BEFORE, AND
CAN EASILY DO SO AGAIN.

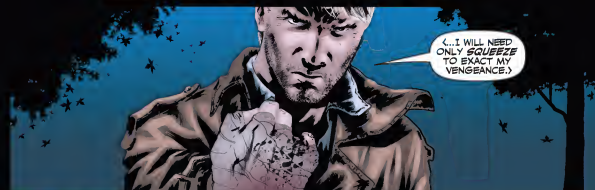
I WILL REMAIN DOWN
HERE WITH THE DRESS
ONLY AS LONG AS I MUST.
I HAVE GRANDER THINGS
IN STORE FOR ME.

PLEASE, MY
BABY! SOMEBODY
HELP ME! MY BABY'S
IN THERE!!

UNGHUUH.

NO, PLEASE,
DON'T...!







(I KNOW
WHAT EVIL LURKS
IN THE HEARTS
OF MEN.)

(BUT THE
DARKNESS THAT
STAINS YOU IS FAR
WORSE THAN *MOST*.
WHATEVER NAME
YOU TRAVEL
UNDER.)



(WHO...
WHO ARE
YOU?)

(LEAVE
ME BE, OR I
WILL...)



(MEN
CALL ME THE
SHADOW.)

(BUT PERHAPS
YOU KNOW ME BY
A *DIFFERENT*
NAME?)



THE GIRASOL
THE ORIGINAL.

{NO, IT
CANNOT BE
YOU...}

{I AM MORE
THAN YOU ONCE KNEW.
I AM THE INSTRUMENT OF
JUDGMENT, THE WEIRD AVENGER
OF THE NIGHT. AND I HAVE COME
TO DELIVER VENGEANCE
UPON YOU.}

{NO,
PLEASE!}

{I ONLY DID
WHAT ANY MAN
WOULD HAVE
DONE!}
{WHAT WAS
NECESSARY TO
SURVIVE.}

TOO OFTEN,
PEOPLE THINK THAT
EVIL MUST BE *GRAND*,
OR *IMPOSING*. THEY
MISTAKE *INTENT* FOR
STATURE.

BUT ALL TOO
OFTEN EVIL IS MEAGER
AND PATHETIC. ONE PERSON
WILLING TO TURN A BLIND
EYE TO THE SUFFERING OF
OTHERS, HEEDLESS OF
THE SUFFERING THEY
THEMSELVES
CAUSE.

SUCH AN EVIL
CAN BE *WORSE* THAN
ALL OF THE MACHINATIONS
AND SCHEMES OF THE
POWERFUL. BECAUSE IT
IS *PERVASIVE*.



PLEASE, IN THE
NAME OF THE SEVENTH
STAR, AND THE BOND WE
ONCE SHARED...

THE MAN YOU
KNEW AS "THE DARK
EAGLE" IS NO MORE,
JUST AS YOU ARE NO
LONGER "THE WHITE
TIGER."

INSTEAD WE STAND
HERE AN INSTRUMENT OF
JUSTICE, AND A MAN WHOSE
CRIMES CALL OUT FOR
JUSTICE.



"SO LET JUSTICE BE SERVED..."

THE END

DYNAMITE®

IN THE NEWS - MARCH 2014

FLASH GORDON #1 CONTINUES THE THRILLING ADVENTURES OF SCI-FI ICON. COURTESY OF JEFF PARKER, EVAN SHANER, AND JORDIE BELLAIRE



Dynamite proudly announces that writer Jeff Parker (*Batman '66*) will continue the science fiction thrills of a science fiction legend in *Flash Gordon* #1, a new ongoing series illustrated by Evan "Doc" Shaner (*Deadpool*) and featuring the colors of Jordie Bellaire (*Pretty Deadly*). Slated to debut in April 2014, *Flash Gordon* marks the 80th anniversary of the fictional icon, follows Parker's critically acclaimed *Kings Watch* miniseries, and includes beloved cast members Dale Arden, Dr. Hans Zarkov, and the infamous Ming the Merciless.

"Dynamite and editor Nate Cosby have put together the dream team for *Flash Gordon*, and I'm the lucky writer who gets to work with them," says Jeff Parker. "We're bringing Flash back for a new audience. It's over-the-planet high action and adventure where Flash's spirit and optimism are as powerful as anything the forces of Ming the Merciless can dish out. We also have some of my favorite artists contributing covers - make no mistake, this book is going to absolutely kill!"

The new *Flash Gordon* series places the ultimate sci-fi hero on the bizarre planet Mongo, where his thirst for thrills and danger makes him the perfect weapon against world-breaking Ming the Merciless and his awful inter-planetary swarms of terror. Can the cocksure Man From Earth funnel his overconfidence into saving worlds, or will the universe fall to Ming?

Dynamite has assembled a team of three highly respected creators for the new *Flash Gordon* series, individuals whose recent comics work has made their names instantly recognizable to fans. Writer Jeff Parker's recent successes at DC Comics - including *Aquaman* and the retro-chic *Batman '66*, follow his many years as a contributor to Marvel titles including *Agents of Atlas*, *X-Men: First Class*, and *Hulk*. Evan "Doc" Shaner will bring his kinetic visual style seen in *Deadpool* and *Ghostbusters* to the *Flash Gordon* project, just as Jordie Bellaire will bring the coloring flair she's known for on such titles as *Pretty Deadly*, *Captain Marvel*, and *The Rocketeer*.

Flash Gordon #1 will feature a wide selection of cover variants, presented by some of comics' most talented artists: Gabriel Hardman, Jonathan Case, Declan Shalvey, and Marc Laming. Stephen Mooney provides a special 80th Anniversary Cover, illustrated to capture an aesthetic of the bygone golden era, while Ken Hasser provides a cute Subscription-Only Variant Cover of "Li'l Flash", intended as a reward for dedicated fans who preorder with their local comic shop retailers. A Blank Authentix Cover will be created for the first issue, featuring blank white space on the cover perfect for convention artist commissions or the creative whims of the do-it-yourself fan.

Comic shop retailers are invited to create store-specific cover editions, as well:

Dynamite has designed a "Death to Ming" propaganda-style cover as a Retailer Exclusive Variant Cover, available for retailers to order through Diamond Comics (Item Code FEB141156). Numerous retailers can share the "Death to Ming" artwork, but have personalized store names built into the front cover design.

Dynamite also welcomes the opportunity to develop unique Retailer Exclusive Variant Covers featuring artwork not available anywhere else. Stores may contact Marketing Manager Keith DavidSEN (keith.davidSEN@dynamite.com, 856-312-1040 x114) for more information.

Flash Gordon #1 will be solicited in Diamond Comic Distributors' February Previews catalog, the premiere source of merchandise for the comic book specialty market, and slated for release on April 9, 2014. Comic book fans are encouraged to reserve copies of *Flash Gordon* #1 with their local comic book retailers. *Flash Gordon* will also be available for individual customer purchase through digital platforms courtesy of Comixology, iVerse, and Dark Horse Digital.



NEXT ISSUE:



ISSUE #24

The authorities are already baffled by a rash of unexplainable deaths in Chinatown, but when the recently deceased begin to rise from their graves and plague the living, it is clear they are out of their league. Thankfully the Shadow is on hand, and ready to stand against the Zombie Queen of Chinatown!

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